

# The McKinney - Vento Homeless Assistance Act:

## A Brief Overview

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# McKinney-Vento Act

## Important Concepts

- Removing barriers to education
  - Determining Eligibility
  - Immediate Enrollment
  - School Selection
  - Transportation
  - Unaccompanied Youth
  - School Nutrition
  - Coordination with Title I, Part A



# Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; reauthorized by Title X, Part C of ESEA

- **Main themes of the McKinney-Vento Act**
  - School access
  - School stability
  - Support for academic success
  - Child-centered, best interest decision making
  - Critical role of the local homeless education liaison

# Local School Liaison

- Local liaisons play a critical role in the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act
- Every public school must designate a local homeless education liaison. Responsibilities include:
  - Identification of homeless students
  - Immediate enrollment
  - Inform parents guardians, & youth of educational rights
  - Link students with educational services – preschool, health service, etc.
  - Ensure public postings of educational rights
  - Ensure that disputes are resolved promptly



# Definition of Homeless

- Who is considered “homeless” according to McKinney-Vento
  - (Homeless definition on handouts)
- Children/youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including;
- The local homeless liaison makes the determination
- Determinations are made on a case-by-case basis

# Protections under McKinney-Vento

## ○ School Selection

- Local Attendance Area School
- School of Origin
  - School attended when permanently housed
  - School in which student was last enrolled
- Best interest of the student
- Students can continue attending their school of origin the entire time they are homeless, and until the end of any school year in which they move into permanent housing
- If a student becomes homeless in between school years, he/she can continue attending the school of origin for the following school year.



# Protections under McKinney-Vento

## ○ Enrollment

- Homeless children/youth have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documentation normally required for enrollment
- If a student does not have immunizations or immunization/medical records, the local liaison must assist immediately in obtaining them, and the student must be enrolled in the interim

# Protections under McKinney-Vento

## ○ Transportation

- Districts must transport homeless students to and from the school of origin, at the parent's or guardian's request (or the liaison's request for unaccompanied youth)
- If the student is living outside the district of origin, the district where the student is living and the district of origin must determine how to divide or share the responsibility and cost
- Districts must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students



# Protections under McKinney-Vento

- **School Nutrition:** Homeless students are automatically eligible to receive free school meals; the USDA permits local liaison and shelter directors to qualify homeless students for free meals by providing a list of names with effective dates
- **Title I Services:** Homeless students are automatically eligible for Title IA services, even if they don't attend a Title IA school or meet the academic standards required for eligibility
- **IDEA** includes special provisions for serving homeless children/youth with disabilities
- Undocumented students have the right to attend public school (*Plyer v. Doe*) and are covered by the McKinney-Vento Act

# Protections under McKinney-Vento

- Dispute Resolution
- Each district/state must have a dispute resolution plan
- While a dispute is being resolved, the student must be admitted immediately into the requested school and provided with services



# Protections under McKinney-Vento

- Unaccompanied youth in homeless situations
  - Definition: Youth who meets the definition of homeless and is not in the physical custody of their parent or guardian
  - There is no lower age limit for unaccompanied youth (usually ages 13-21)
- Local liaison must help unaccompanied homeless youth choose and enroll in school, inform the youth of his/her rights
- Schools do not need to agree with all aspects of a student's home life to educate him/her

# Main Theme of the McKinney-Vento Act

- Remove barriers to acquiring a free appropriate public education